

United States Department of Agriculture



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"A Partner in Conservation Since 1935"

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MINNESOTA BULLETIN NO. 300-5-51

June 29, 2005

SUBJECT: LTP – EQIP – LOCAL WORK GROUPS

Purpose. To transmit a MASWCD/NRCS joint letter.

Expiration Date. September 30, 2005.

Attached to this bulletin is a jointly signed letter from Carol Berg, President of the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts and myself supporting locally-led conservation. This letter demonstrates the MASWCD and NRCS commitment to locally-led conservation and to the Local Work Group Process once again in 2005.

Keep up the great work that has made locally-led conservation a success in Minnesota.

WILLIAM HUNT
State Conservationist

DIST: AE

Attachment

June 29, 2005

MN SWCD's
MN NRCS

In 2003 the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) in Minnesota initiated a new dimension in locally-led conservation. The use of Local Work Groups, combined with local funding allocations, put a renewed emphasis on local problems, local resources, and local priorities. The process of identifying and prioritizing local resource problems is the foundation for a highly successful EQIP in every part of Minnesota.

One indication that you are all doing a good job is the amount of interest that has been generated by other organizations looking to get involved in your Local Work Groups. They have observed how well you are gathering local input and that you are valuing those contributions. They're paying attention to what we do! The process of seeking public input, discussing resource concerns, and setting priorities ensures that EQIP is both relevant and dynamic at the county level.

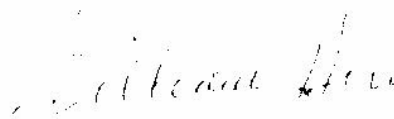
We commend all the SWCD and NRCS employees for the time and commitment they have provided to the Local Work Group process since 2003.

As we gear up for the next round of EQIP, we are asking you each to again use the Local Work Group process to establish your local program. Each district and NRCS office is asked to conduct their listening sessions and Local Work Group meetings during August and September 2005. This will help the next round go more smoothly as we await funding allocations for the 2006 fiscal year, starting October 1, 2005.

Again, congratulations on your success with EQIP and let's further strengthen locally-led EQIP for 2006 and beyond.



CAROL BERG
President, MASWCD



WILLIAM HUNT
State Conservationist